there are scenes that show an advance in descriptive power. The picture of life at the little German Court of Reiseriberg is cleverly painted, and lacks neither movement nor variety. But the book as a whole is flat and dull, and the story leads to nothing. Our interest ha? no sooner been awakened in a character or a situat; .a than we are whisked away to something else, and the result is a novel which is fragmentary and inconsecutive, and always unsatisfying. The author in fact was not sufficiently recovered from the strain of the previous year for a fresh creative effort.

The most interesting character in the book is Becken-dorff, the Prime Minister of Reisenberg, Disraeli's first attempt at a finished portrait of a statesman. Becken-dorff is a man of plebeian origin who has raised himself to power by the force of his own 'master-mind.' He is of a type that recurs more than once in Disraeli's other novels, and is made the medium for the exposition of some of Disraeli's favourite doctrines. ' Fate, Destiny, Chance, particular and special Providence — idle words. Dismiss them all, Sir! A man's Fate is his own temper.' 'Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men. We are free agents, and man is more powerful than matter.' 'No conjuncture can possibly occur, however fearful, however tremendous it may appear, from which a man, by his own energy, may not extricate himself.'[1] In Beckendorff Vivian Grey sees a man with his own principles of conduct whose ambition has been crowned with success.

Apparently the philosophy on which Beckendorff had regulated his extraordinary career was exactly the same with which he himself, Vivian G-rey, had started in life; •which he had found so fatal in its consequences; which he believed to be so vain in its principles. How was this? What radical error had he committed? It required little consideration. Thirty, and more than thirty, years had passed over the head of Beckendorff, ere the world felt his power, or indeed was conscious of his existence. A deep

[1] Bk. VI. oh. 7.